

KHPA Activity

Agency updates
focused on KHPA
stakeholders.

Save the Dates:

KHPA Advisory Councils:

Provider Council:

Date: Thursday, Feb. 12

Time: 10-noon

Location: Landon State
Office Building Room 9E/F

Consumer Council:

Date: Friday, Feb. 13

Time: 10-noon

Location: Landon State
Office Building Room 9E/F

At-Large Council:

Date: Monday, Feb. 16

Time: 3–5 pm

Location: Curtis State Of-
fice Building, Room 530

Purchaser Council:

Date: Friday, Feb. 20

Time: 10-noon

Location: Landon State
Office Building Room 9E/F

NEW!

To view KHPA tes-
timony, please
visit our [website](#).

Testimony is typi-
cally posted on
the same day
hearings are held.

Medicaid Transformation Plan Complete

The Kansas Health Policy Authority Board has accepted a 357-page report on the state's Medicaid program and promised to monitor progress on implementing its recommendations on how to make Medicaid more effective and cost-efficient.

The report is a product of KHPA's ongoing "Medicaid Transformation" process, a continuous project that involves in-depth reviews of each program and service in the Kansas Medicaid program. The 2008 report, which will also be delivered to the Kansas legislature, covers 14 different aspects of Kansas Medicaid. An additional 12 program reviews are scheduled for completion in early 2010. This year's report includes proposed budget initiatives that would save the state an estimated \$11.7 million over five years, plus administrative proposals estimated to save another \$16.6 million.

The full 2008 Medicaid Transformation report, along with an executive summary can be found on the KHPA website: www.khpa.ks.gov.

Also at its Jan. 20 meeting the KHPA Board appointed **Felany Opiso-Williams** as the Interim Leader for the Office of Inspector General. Opiso-Williams currently works as an auditor in the Inspector General's office. The former Inspector General resigned effective Oct. 31. Opiso-Williams will serve as the interim leader of the office for 120 days, after which the Board will revisit the issue of filling the vacant position on a permanent basis.

In other business, the KHPA Board heard a report about the impact that the Governor's budget proposal would have on the State Employee Health Plan. The Governor's proposal includes a 14-week (seven pay periods) moratorium on employer contributions to the self-funded health insurance plan. That translates to a \$58.4 million reduction in contributions. According to an analysis by KHPA staff, as well as independent actuaries, the insurance fund has been carrying a reserve balance larger than necessary to keep it financially sound.

The Kansas Health Policy Authority administers the State Employee Health Plan but the benefits and premiums are determined by the Kansas State Health Care Commission, which is chaired by the Secretary of Administration. KHPA will continue to monitor the insurance plan's fund balances and make recommendations to the Health Care Commission to ensure it remains financially stable.

Legislative Activities

Things to Watch:

Tuesday, Jan. 27

- Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee
- S.B. 25 - Statewide prohibition on smoking in indoor public areas (proponents)
- 1:30 p.m., Room 136-N

Wednesday, Jan. 28

- Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee
- S.B. 25 - Statewide prohibition on smoking in indoor public areas (opponents)
- 1:30 p.m., Room 136-N

Thursday, Jan. 29

- House Health & Human Services Committee
- KHPA - Agency overview
- 3:30 p.m., Room 786, Docking SOB

New Congress Works on SCHIP, Stimulus

The U.S. Congress reconvened this month and went to work immediately on bills affecting the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Medicaid.

The House passed a bill Jan. 14 to extend the SCHIP program for another four and a half years. The bill also expands the program by raising the family income limit from 200 percent of the federal poverty level to 300 percent. The Senate is expected to take up a similar version of the bill next week. SCHIP was established in 1997 as a way to provide health coverage to children whose families cannot afford private insurance but make too much to qualify for Medicaid. Without an extension the program is scheduled to expire in March.

Meanwhile both chambers are actively working on an economic stimulus package, known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Both versions of the bill contain provisions dealing with Medicaid. They call for temporarily increasing the federal government's share of state Medicaid costs, with additional increases for individual states that have experienced big jumps in their unemployment rates during the recent economic downturn.

KHPA Executive Director Marcia Nielsen and state Medicaid Director Dr. Andrew Allison sent a letter to the Kansas congressional delegation this week urging them to support an across-the-board increase in federal Medicaid matching payments, which would result in significantly more money for Kansas. The full text of the letter can be viewed on the [KHPA website](#).

Clean Indoor Air Bill Set for Senate Hearings

The Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee will hold hearings Jan. 27-28 on a bill to enact a statewide clean indoor air law in Kansas.

Senate Bill 25, introduced by Sen. David Wyson (R-Shawnee Mission) would prohibit smoking in virtually all indoor establishments and workplaces, including bars and restaurants. KHPA has expressed its strong support for the bill. Passage of a statewide clean indoor air law is one of the top recommendations in KHPA's legislative agenda for 2009.

An alternative bill has also been introduced in the Senate that would exempt bars and restaurants. The bill was introduced at the request of Ron Hein, a contract lobbyist who represents the bar and restaurant industries.

KHPA Pulse is a publication by the KHPA Communications Team distributed weekly during the legislative session. If you have questions or comments, contact the Public Information Officer Peter Hancock at 785/296.5603 or peter.hancock@khpas.gov

